

BLESS

Intentional practices for sharing Hope
& leading people one step closer to Jesus.

Begin in Prayer

I will *ble*ss the people in my life and in the places that I'm in.

Listen

I will *lis*ten to the needs of those people I'm *ble*ssing.

Eat

I will *eat* with the people I'm *lis*tening to as I keep on *ble*ssing.

Serve

I will offer to *serve* the people I'm *eat*ing with after I've *lis*tened to what would be helpful to them, while I continue *ble*ssing.

Story

I will share the *stories* of Jesus, the *stories* Jesus told, the *stories* of my life, and the *story* of God as I'm *serv*ing and *eat*ing and *lis*tening and *ble*ssing.

WHAT IS A BLESSING?

The Scriptures are full of blessings. The act of blessing is the involvement of God's spiritual power for the benefit of those addressed. The authority to bless (Romans 12:14 - "Bless and do not curse") is one of the most precious gifts God has given us. Genuine spiritual transactions take place when we speak blessing.

The authority of God's people to bless is a powerful endowment. When you speak a blessing, you aren't just saying idle words; you are willing good for that person. You're standing in God's presence as one of His chosen people and priests, welcoming His goodness into the life of another. It is one way to practice seeing His will done "on earth as it is in heaven."

Blessing can be directly spoken over others or indirectly proclaimed in times of prayer apart from those you wish to bless. For example, you can declare something like this prayer:

"Today, by the authority that God has given me as a son/daughter of the King, I bless (my coworkers, my family, my neighbors, etc.) with peace, hope, faith, and generosity. I bless their families to flourish, their work to be fruitful, and their lives to be a blessing to those around them."

Or you can pray a single word or phrase of blessing for each individual depending on their life circumstances and needs. For example:

"I bless (name) with trust in God's timing." "May (name) gain a deep sense of calling and identity." "I bless (name) with health and life." "May (name and name) be restored in relationship."

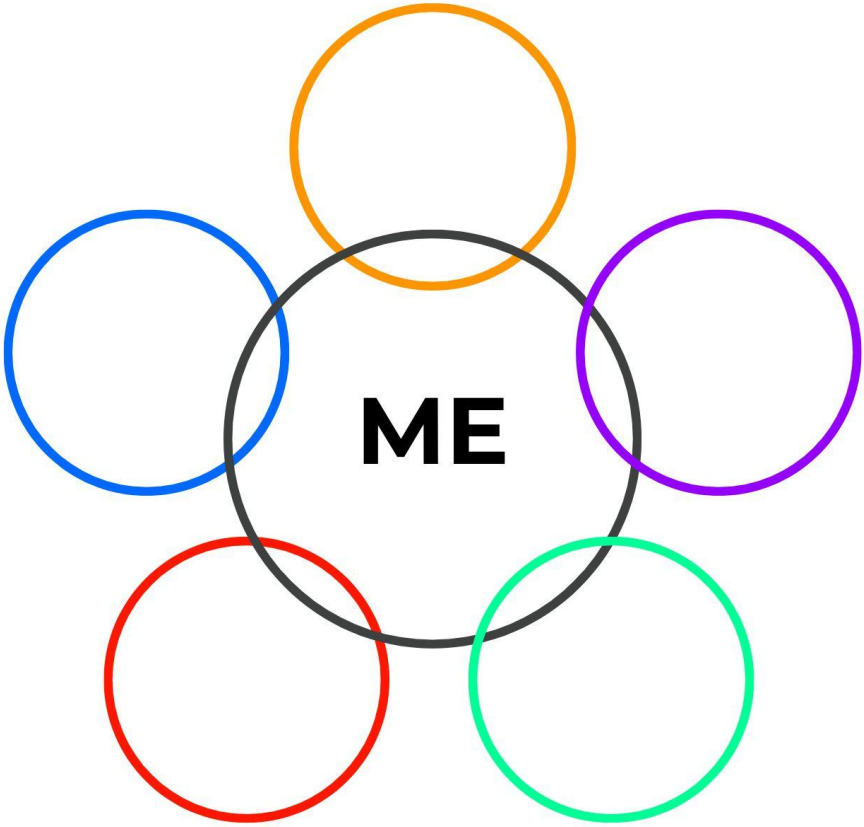
Consider sending a note or text message to those you have blessed in prayer so they can be directly encouraged by your blessing.

When we authoritatively declare freedom over people trapped in darkness, we begin the progression from darkness to light into forgiveness and Hope in Christ. Incredible things will happen when you begin practicing this sort of intercessory prayer.

HOW TO BEGIN PRACTICING BLESS

Commit to Blessing Five People a Day, Five Days a Week.

Write the names in the five circles:



Questions to consider when committing to your five. Who...

- has recently stopped joining for worship, dinner, groups, etc?
- is easy to have coffee with?
- is the most unlikely person to become a Christian that I know?
- would take the tiniest nudge to move closer to Jesus?
- is my immediate neighbor?
- are people that are natural connectors?

Begin in Prayer

Pray for people who need encouragement and/or who need to meet Jesus. Pray that they will move from darkness to light into forgiveness and hope. Pray that they would live responsively to the Spirit and responsibly in the family of God. Pray that the gifts and fruit of the Spirit would develop in their lives.

Listen

In your interactions today, be a learner. Set your assumptions aside, ask open-ended questions and practice being completely present (put the phone down when talking with people). Listen to what is said and read between the lines to learn about people.

Eat

Share meals with people in your life: people you don't know, people you do know, and people who are different than you. Everyone needs to eat. Even if you have nothing in common, everyone needs to eat.

Serve

Ask and discern the needs of others and then respond by helping them in ways that are practical and meaningful to them. Sometimes, a simple, "how can I help?" is a great way to learn how to serve others.

Story

Stories matter. Jesus used stories—a lot! Stories lower people's defenses and allow people to see and meet Jesus in the power of His Spirit. Thus, we share our life stories and we share the stories of Jesus: stories about Jesus and stories Jesus told.